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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 1102
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 0805
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON IMMEDIATE 0889
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE 0995
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 1008
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DILI 000385

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STATE FOR EAP/MTS
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/20/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [TT](#)
SUBJECT: TIMOR-LESTE: REINADO ON THE ROAD TO NOWHERE

REF: DILI 370 (REBEL REINADO HANGS TOUGH)

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CLASSIFIED BY: Henry M. Rector, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S.
Embassy Dili, Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

(C) 1. Summary. On December 16, dissident military leader Major Alfredo Reinado (reftel) was once again a no-show to a meeting with Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao and others, even though the meeting's conditions were based on Reinado's own demands. Reinado claimed that he was not comfortable with security arrangements surrounding the meeting site, and that he had been tipped off to International Stabilization Force (ISF) checkpoints along the approach to Dili. However, there is no evidence which bears out his claims in either regard. Senior GOTL officials told us that Reinado made a last-minute demand that two supporters, now in prison due to their acts during the 2006 crisis, be released and permitted to attend the meeting with the Prime Minister. The government refused and Reinado withdrew. This last-minute rupture by Reinado infuriated the Prime Minister. Gusmao is indicating that he will give Reinado "one last chance" to come to the negotiating table, and that if that too fails, immediate decisive action will be taken. End summary.

The Slow Road to Dialogue

(C) 2. Over the course of the past two months, the Government of Timor-Leste has engaged dissident military leader Major Alfredo Reinado in cautious dialogue as a preliminary to a negotiated settlement based on Reinado's acceptance of secure cantonment. Over the past days, several meetings among Reinado and his representatives directly, GOTL officials, and intermediaries from the Geneva-based Center for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD) led to agreement to hold a meeting on December 16 between Reinado, Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao, and other GOTL officials to address issues arising from the April-May 2006 crisis. Following discussions which went late into the evening of December 15, it appeared that a framework had been established and agreed upon, and that at 0900 hours the following day, the meeting would take place at the Office of the President of the Republic. According to CHD Director Leon Riedmatten, who was instrumental in coordinating much of the recent dialogue, the conditions for the gathering were clear,

and there was nothing in the arrangements that Reinado should have found even remotely threatening.

(C) 3. According to the agreed plan, Reinado and military petitioner spokesman First Lieutenant Gastao Salsinha were to travel by road from Gleno in a convoy that included six armed members of his group. (Reinado had initially requested that he be flown to Dili. The GOTL had made inquiries with both UNMIT and the ISF on his behalf, but neither would consent to such support.) Upon arrival, he and Salsinha would proceed unarmed into President Ramos-Horta's office, and the other members of Reinado's group would remain outside the office compound. Once inside the office, Reinado and Salsinha would meet with Gusmao, President of the National Parliament Fernando de Araujo, the Timor-Leste Defense Force (F-FDTL) Chief of Staff Colonel Lere Anan Timur, and the Permanent Secretary to the Minister of Defense Lieutenant Colonel Filomeno Paixao. Reinado had originally demanded that both President Jose Ramos-Horta and F-FDTL Commander Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak participate. However, since Ramos-Horta and TMR were not in Timor-Leste during the 2006 events to be addressed at the meeting, it was agreed they would remain outside the meeting site but on stand-by in the event their respective presence was required.

Rebuffed by Reinado yet again

(C) 4. On the morning of December 16, Dili was calm, and the security presence throughout the city appeared especially light except in the immediate vicinity of the President's office. At 0900 hours, the GOTL delegation was present. But by 0930, with Reinado nowhere in sight, it had become evident he was once again backing away from dialogue. Shortly thereafter he called Embassy Dili's political assistant to say that there were ISF checkpoints along the approach into the capital city and that he felt as if he were walking into a trap. He also claimed that since he was to walk into the meeting room unarmed and without security, this also left him vulnerable. Senior GOTL and UNMIT officials later described Reinado's statements to our political FSN as fabrications. In fact, Reinado had asked that two

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compatriots (AKA Nixon and Batista) be released from prison and join in the meeting with the Prime Minister. The government refused. In any event, his absence reportedly angered the Prime Minister greatly.

(C) 5. After Reinado failed to appear, , the Prime Minister announced that he would give Reinado "one last chance," but that this time the meeting would be conducted on Gusmao's terms only. He added that if Reinado would not submit to this, the GOTL response would be immediate and decisive. According to Riedmatten, Gusmao is entertaining a window in mid-January for a subsequent effort, and that during a discussion with Ramos-Horta and UNMIT Special Representative to the Secretary General Atul Khare December 18, all parties were on board with this approach.

(C) 6. Comment: The GOTL's remarkable patience in dealing with Reinado reflects an extremely cautious approach, but his refusal to participate in a meeting set up on his on terms calls into question his good faith and state of mind. The GOTL strongly prefers a negotiated settlement, but in the event tough action is eventually required against Reinado, it would likely seek to minimize violence by reaching out to Reinado's sympathizers, such as western district traditional leaders and FALINTIL veterans, while relying on the ISF for the purpose of maintaining calm and order in Dili. Senior UNMIT officials confirmed that planning has begun for possible kinetic action against Reinado should efforts at dialogue fail. End comment.
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